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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, November 14, 1935
U. S. Department of Agriculture

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "HOME INDUSTRIES IN TEXAS." Information from the Extension Service, U.S.D.A.

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Once again, I have news for you of some rural housewives who are running successful small businesses of their own along with their job of housekeeping. If you ever have the urge to add a bit to the family income, perhaps you'll be interested in hearing how other women are doing it.

The stories I have to tell you today are all about Texas women. And I heard them from Miss Bess Edwards, who is the assistant state home demonstration agent in that State.

Miss Edwards says that Texas women on farms have taken up various home industries to get a little extra cash for home conveniences, labor-saving equipment, education, or for better living conditions generally. She says that butter-and-egg money still furnishes most of this extra cash. Poultry products are still the farm woman's standby for money-making. But Texas women have found other profitable industries in home-baking, canning and rug making.

For example, several women have a good business in homemade pickles. First, they attended the pickle-making demonstrations put on by the extension service to learn exactly what high-quality pickles are and how to make them. Last year one Texas housekeeper sold 50 gallons of pickles to hotels and cafes in Fort Worth for 225 dollars. Another Texas woman has 40 gallons of these high quality pickles now ready to sell and the expense of brining her homegrown products was only 1 dollar and 51 cents. In Dallas County, 35 women have standardized their pickles for market and have worked together for a quality product which they can sell at hotels, restaurants, and stores.

Canned chicken has proved a best-seller for several Texas women. A Mrs. Bishop of the Pendleton Home Demonstration Club standardized her boned and ground chicken last spring and then started to sell it. The latest report from her is that she has sold 50 cans of her boned chicken at 35 cents for a No. 1 can. She figured that it costs her 16 cents to produce each can. Not a great profit, to be sure. But she says that if she sells her chicken on foot, she can get at the most only 50 or 60 cents for them whereas she makes 95 cents apiece for them canned.

Texas women in several counties have worked up a business in canned chicken. The State poultry and home marketing specialists have shown them how best to feed, kill, dress and can their chickens. Though prices for chickens on foot have varied a good deal this year, these women find that their profit per can of chicken averages 15 cents. Local grocers stock this standardized home-canned chicken and it sells wholesale for 35 cents for ground and 45 cents for boned chicken in No. 1 cans.

One of these women who worked up a market for her canned chicken is now also selling her canned chili. She says: "We have doubled our money by making beef chili of our 5 calves instead of selling them on foot." She had 5 calves at the beginning of summer that would have brought at top price only 12 dollars each on the market or a total of 60 dollars. But using her steam pressure cooker as is done in all meat canning work in Texas, she made those calves into 500 No. 2 cans of standard quality chili and sold them at 25 cents a can. So instead of securing 60 dollars she received 125 dollars.

Mrs. Peek who lives in Cameron County has sold 30 whole crystallized grapefruits and 5 pounds of candied peel during the past year. The cost of making these products was 14 dollars and 75 cents. She received 40 dollars in cash. So her profit for time and labor spent was 25 dollars and 25 cents.

The home bakers have been doing business in Texas, too. For example, Mrs. Farr of Cook County has sold 754 loaves of bread this year for about 90 dollars. Her bread cost her approximately 5 cents a loaf to make and left her a profit of a little over 6 cents a loaf. Another woman made 100 dollars' worth of cakes during the last 9 months.

A Mrs. Richardson in Smith County has the largest individual business of any member of a home demonstration club in Smith County. Her business is cakes. She averages 15 cakes a week, sells them at the market, a leading grocery store and by individual orders. During the past year she has sold 720 cakes for a total of 766 dollars. She specializes in angel food, devil's food, cocoanut, caramel and spice cakes. She has standardized her recipes so her cakes are uniformly delicious and she has many steady customers. By the way, she produces her own eggs, butter and milk for these cakes and by using these products this way, she gets much more for them than she would if she sold them direct.

Here's the story of another successful Texas home baker. She says: "The opening of the home demonstration market in our town gave me a chance to have my products standardized. My products were light bread, coffee cake, Boston brown bread, cup cakes and cookies. I have made more profit and had to work less on cookies and coffee cake than on bread and cakes. I make it a point to keep my products up to standard, always fill my orders, never disappoint a customer, be dependable, and put up an attractive product. How much does my business bring? Well, I make enough to buy all the groceries and clothing for my family of 5 and to pay telephone bills and a few of the extras that we could not afford without this extra income."

A young college girl in Texas is helping herself through school by putting up tomato juice. Last year she put^{up} and sold 800 containers. This year she sold 1008 No. 2 cans. She raises her own tomatoes and the juice she cans has a fine flavor that many prefer to some they buy.

Well, here's our time gone already and I haven't even started to tell you about the Texas rug makers. A lot of women are making beautiful hooked rugs at home and making good sales on them too. But that's a story for another day.

You'll notice that none of these home industries are get-rich-quick schemes. The profits are not large. And the women have to learn how to standardize their products and take a great deal of time and labor getting high quality if they sell them. But many of them enjoy their work and seem satisfied with the returns they get.

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